

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sargent Controls & Aerospace

Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Sargent Controls Launches Lean Transformation Initiative

Client Profile:

Sargent Controls, a subsidiary of Dover Corp., manufactures hydraulic valves for U.S. Navy submarines and surface ships, as well as specialized, coated, high-load, low-RPM ball bearings for military helicopters. The company also manufactures valves and actuators for the aerospace industry. Sargent Controls has approximately 125 employees and has been in business over 10 years in Tucson, Arizona.

Situation:

As a tier-one supplier to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the defense industry, Sargent Controls faced increasing pressure to reduce prices and costs. In addition, dramatic increases in business anticipated over the next five years will make the management of the company so complex that its ability to respond to customer needs could be reduced. Sargent Controls wanted to explore the benefits and processes that are part of the lean manufacturing transformation model, so it came to the Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Arizona MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for guidance.

Solution:

At Arizona MEP's suggestion, Sargent Controls sent two individuals to Arizona MEP's new Lean 101-Principles of Lean Manufacturing with hands-on Time Wise simulation training program. In this program, the participants learned 12 techniques for reducing eight types of waste throughout the manufacturing processes. The Sargent participants, along with participants from several other companies, actually applied the 12 techniques to a real manufacturing process, and measured and tracked the value of their improved performance over four rounds of simulation.

After the training, the Sargent Controls participants became the core of the company's newly-created "Lean Implementation Team," which began to implement the 12 principles in various areas of the company's operation. The first project addressed implementation of the 5S Workplace Standardization and Organization methodology in one of the company's main divisions. Finally, Arizona MEP brought in the City of Tucson Office of Economic Development, which helped the company write and submit an application for Arizona Job Training Grant funds, awarded to Sargent Controls in the amount of \$400,000 over two years.

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Results:

Created a "Lean Implementation Team" to lead the company's lean transformation.

Increased productivity.

Increased management commitment to lean manufacturing.

Created pilot test manufacturing cells.

Began developing a plan to govern long-term transformation.

Won \$400,000 in Arizona Job Training Grant funds.

Testimonial:

"In order for us to be successful in delivering work over the next five years, Sargent Controls will have to undergo a major transformation to lean manufacturing. The Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership gave us the background training and the impetus to begin our journey down the lean transformation pathway."

Terry Petersen, Vice President of Operations